



## U.S.—CHINA COMMISSION

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June 6, 2003

Hon. Bill Frist  
Senate Majority Leader

Hon. J. Dennis Hastert  
Speaker of the House

Hon. Tom Daschle  
Senate Democratic Leader

Hon. Nancy Pelosi  
House Democratic Leader

Dear Congressional Leaders:

We are writing to urge Congressional action on a matter of utmost importance and urgency, namely the impending approval by the Hong Kong Legislative Council of legislation that would undercut the basic freedoms of the Hong Kong people.

On July 9, the Hong Kong Legislative Council is scheduled to consider legislation that would give the Beijing-sponsored Hong Kong Government the ability to criminalize a wide range of religious, political, and journalistic activities without due process or basic legal standards. By so doing, the bill would undermine the basic freedoms guaranteed to the Hong Kong people by the Sino-British Joint Declaration of 1984 and the concept of “one country, two systems” that were the underpinnings of the handover of Hong Kong from Britain to the People’s Republic of China in 1997. The legislation has been opposed by numerous legal scholars, including the Hong Kong and New York City Bar Associations.

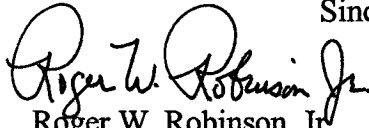
The Commission had the privilege of meeting yesterday with Martin Lee and a high-level delegation of Hong Kong legislators and other leading citizens. Mr. Lee, the renowned founding chairman of the Democratic Party of Hong Kong, explained that this repressive legislation would, undoubtedly, roll back the basic freedoms of the Hong Kong people. In a recent editorial in the New York Times he noted that passage of the law “would introduce Chinese legal standards through the back door,” allowing the Hong Kong Government to clamp down on civil liberties using the same methods as those employed by the mainland government.


On behalf of the Commission, we urge the Congress to take strong action as soon as possible opposing the proposed legislation and requesting that the Hong Kong Government withdraw the bill from consideration before the Legislative Council. We also believe that the President and Secretary of State should argue forcefully against the bill with their Chinese counterparts.



We believe that an immediate and concerted effort by the U.S. Government is needed to effect the withdrawal of this legislation and protect the fundamental freedoms of the Hong Kong people.

Sincerely,

  
Roger W. Robinson, Jr.  
Chairman

  
C. Richard D'Amato  
Vice Chairman